

Address by Master, Academy of Medicine, Singapore at the Opening Ceremony of the 38th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine and Induction Ceremony

CH LOW, FAMS

Our Guest of Honour, His Excellency President S R Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore and Patron of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore and Mrs Nathan; Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Minister for Health and Mrs Khaw; Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman, Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Community Development, Youth and Sports; Prof K Satku, Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health; Professor Dato' Mrs Kew, President of the 38th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine and Master, Academy of Medicine, Malaysia; Dr Leong Che Hung, President, Hong Kong Academy of Medicine; Visiting Overseas Presidents and Representatives of Fraternal Academies/Colleges; Heads of Institutions; Distinguished Guests, Fellow Academicians, Ladies and Gentlemen:

A very good evening to you!

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Opening Ceremony of the 38th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine with participation of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and Induction Comitia of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore.

First, may I on behalf of the Academies thank His Excellency, President S R Nathan, for kindly consenting to be the Guest-of-Honour this evening in spite of his heavy commitment in the midst of our National Day celebration. We are deeply appreciative. We would also like to acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Health, Mr Khaw Boon Wan. Minister Sir, may we congratulate you on your new appointment as Full Minister. Your constant presence at our functions is a source of encouragement and inspiration for us to work even harder for the improvement of the healthcare system in Singapore. The Academy is very pleased to welcome Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman into the healthcare family.

The Malaysia-Singapore Congress of Medicine continues to flourish and remains one of the highlights of the activities of the 2 academies. These congresses have become the main bridge between our 2 countries, bringing the medical fraternity of our 2 nations closer together. This year, we are pleased to have the participation of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, and I would like to thank Dr Leong Che Hung, President of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, for his support.

May I take this opportunity also to thank Dr Ho Lai Yun and his hard working Committee for their hard work in

putting together this excellent scientific programme. Thank you.

In 2005, we will be celebrating 100 years of medical education in our country. The Academy of Medicine Malaysia and Singapore will be co-organising the 39th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine, and incorporating the 100th year celebration into its programme. We hope you will be able to join us for this celebration (100 years is a short time in the history of medicine but a giant step for our young nations).

The Academy of Medicine Singapore is going through a momentous period in its history both in its organisational structure and its role in ensuring the highest standard of postgraduate training.

At the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 27 March 2004, Fellows passed the special resolutions for formation of Colleges for the following Chapters:

1. Anaesthesiologists
2. Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
3. Paediatricians
4. Physicians
5. Radiologists
6. Surgeons

I am delighted to inform you that, 2 days ago on 17 August 2004, we have received approval from the Accounting & Corporate Regulatory Authority for the formation of these Colleges. These Colleges are subsidiaries of the Academy but will be given a degree of autonomy. Let us remember that it is the previous Council, under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Prof K Satku, that has laid the foundation stone for the establishment of the Colleges. To Prof Satku and his hard working Council and Chairmen of Chapters, we say a big thank you for daring to tread an untrodden path. I look forward to all specialists taking an even more active role in the Academy and Colleges to add to the quantity and quality of what the Academy now does for the medical and dental fraternities.

The theme of this year's Congress is "*Continuing Professional Development and Professionalism: The Next Lap*". 2,500 years ago, Hippocrates writing about challenges of medicine wrote these words: *Life is short, the art is long, the occasion fleeting, experience fallacious, and judgement difficult*. Today, these words ring hauntingly true, if at all

the challenges are even greater. We need professionalism to face these challenges. Professionalism is not just about being good clinician, expert in technology and skill in craft. Professionalism also embodies good ethical practices, appropriate professional conduct, effective communication skills and total commitment to our calling. Qualities which are not easily measured, but must be incorporated into our training system. There are problems and difficulties ahead. But let us look at these problems as challenges and challenges as opportunity to bring professionalism to greater heights to serve our patients better. In the search for excellence in medicine, let us not forget that it is not the science of technology alone, but the art of healing; not the pride of knowledge but the humility of wisdom that makes a good doctor.

This evening, we are privilege to confer the Honorary Fellowship to Dr Andrew Chew, Chairman Public Service Commission of Singapore. We are also pleased to induct 17 Distinguished Overseas Presidents and 82 local specialists into the fold of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore. My new fellow academicians, you have joined a great institution of fine tradition and distinction. To my young fellow colleagues who have gone through the rigours of many exams to become Fellows, may I humbly remind you that

with this honour comes heavy responsibilities. We ask of you to be good efficient doctors, and we know you are, we expect of you to be responsible and dedicated, and we know you can be. We demand of you to be totally committed, ethical in all your practices and we hope you will be. My dear fellow academicians, on your shoulder rest the responsibilities of moulding a new generation of doctors and specialists – greater than the past and in tune with the visions of the future. In your hands lies the hope of our country for you to bring the medical profession to greater heights to serve our patients better –more responsive, cost effective and holistic.

Years of clinical practice can sometimes harden your heart and numb your souls, remember to lubricate regularly with doses of compassion and milk of human kindness. Knowledge makes you a doctor. Compassion makes you a healer. (Let us uphold Academy's motto – *Recta Sapere* – which means, to seek and savour the truth at all times. To serve is better than to be served.)

Together we shall all look forward to greater, better and honest true professionalism. In the pursuit for medical excellence in professionalism, the sky has no limit.

Thank you.